(b) and (c) Government of India is extending financial assistance to those State Governments under Accelerated Power Development and Reforms Programme (APDRP) who sign MoU/MoA with Government of India committing themselves to a time bound programme of reforms including setting up of SERC. An amount of Rs. 22.42 crore were to be released during the Financial Year 2000-01 to Kerala under this programme. As the Government of Kerala had not signed the MoU and had not constituted SERC these funds were not released to it.

(d) and (e) As the Government of Kerala has signed the MoU with Ministry of Power on 4.8.2001 an amount of Rs. 17.07 crore was released to them under APDRP during 2002-03.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Mining undertaken in Aravali Hills near Delhi

1506. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of COAL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that extensive mining operation is undertaken in the Aravali Hills near Delhi;

(b) if so, what are the guidelines for issuing mining licences in the ecologically sensitives areas, the number of operators engaged in mining in the region and action taken against violators of norms during the last three years;

(c) whether it is a fact that indiscriminate mining has badly affected the ground water level and the forest in the region; and

(d) if so, the measures contemplated to protect the Aravali Hills and the water level in the region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL AND MINES (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) The State Government of Haryana has informed that mining operation upto 5 km. from Delhi-Haryana boundary lying closed in view of interim orders dated 6.5.2002 passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. Moreover, the Supreme Court in its order dated 31.10.2002 has directed that all mining activity in the Aravali Hills is prohibited and banned.

(b) The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), Government of India, has declared Aravali Hills of District Gurgoan of Haryana and District Alwar of Rajasthan, as ecologically sensitive areas and *vide* their

notification dated 7.5.1992 prohibited mining operation without obtaining prior environmental clearance of designated authority. Mining leases in Gurgoan District have been granted by, the State Government of Haryana subject to the condition that the lessee shall commence mining operation only after obtaining environmental clearance from the designated authority. The mining leases for major minerals (leases more than 5ha.) for rest of areas have been granted by the State Government of Haryana subject to the condition that lessee shall obtain environmental clearance as per Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) notification dated 27.1.1994.

(c) and (d) The Minister of Environment and Forests has informed that mine lease holders/applicants have to make an application to the concerned authority alongwith an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Report and an Environment Management Plan (EMP) alongwith the necessary approvals/clearances obtained from the concerned State Government, No Objection Certificate/Consent to Establish from the State Pollution Control Board, Mine Plan Approval from the Indian bureau of Mines and such other requirements such as sanction/approval of the State Government for drawing power and water, etc. and approval from the Central Ground Water Authority if groundwater abstraction is involved for carrying out mining operation or if the potential mining operations could adversely impact the ground water regime of the region. Those fulfilling all the stipulated conditions are given an environmental clearance and the stipulated conditions are required to be implemented by the mine owner for the entire activity of the mine to ensure that there are no adverse impacts of the mining activity on to the environment.

Seeking advice from a German Company Regarding modernisation of Lignite Briquetting Unit

†1507. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of COAL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Neveli Lignite Corporation (NLC) has sought advice from a German company on commissioning of modernised Lignite Briquetting Unit in the year, 1999;

(b) if so, how much amount was paid to the concerned company;

(c) what was the advice of the concerned company and when it was sought;

(d) how much amount was estimated to be spent on the commissioning of the Lignite Briquetting Unit at that time alongwith the

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.